

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 LOC-01 ARAE-00 AID-05 EB-07 OMB-01

CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10 /081 W

----- 043341

P R 092152Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 82

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR VE

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER ESCOVAR SALOM DENIES POSSIBILITY OF

U.S. INVASION OF VENEZUELA

REF STATE 213920

1. CARACAS DAILY EL NACIONAL ON SEP 9 GAVE FRONT-PAGE COVERAGE TO STATEMENT BY VENEZUELAN FOREIGN MIN RAMON ESCOVAR SALOM THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT THE U.S. WAS CONTEMPLATING AN INVASION OF VENEZUELA. IN RESPONSE TO A JOURNALIST'S INQUIRY CONCERNING A U.S. CONGRESSIONAL STUDY ON THE POSSIBILITY OF INVADING OPEC COUNTRIES, ESCOVAR REPORTEDLY RESPONDED, "I AM NOT FAMILIAR WITH THE TEST OF THIS REPORT, BUT IN THESE TIMES IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO INVADE SOVERIEGN NATIONS. IT WAS POSSIBLE TO DO SO IN AN EARLIER PERIOD, BUT NOT NOW."

2. ESCOVAR'S STATEMENT COMES AMIDST SPECULATION HERE OVER A RECENT UPI REPORT THAT A SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE HAD CONCLUDED, ON THE BASIS OF A REPORT PREPARED BY THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, THAT A U.S. MILITARY TAKEOVER OF VENEZUELAN AND NIGERIAN OIL FIELDS WOULD BE "EASY BUT COUNTERPRODUCTIVE." UPI REPORT PROMPTED VENEZUELAN MINES MINISTER VALENTIN HERNANDEZ TO

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TELL THE PRESS THAT HE ATTACHED LITTLE IMPORTANCE TO SUCH A MILITARY

STUDY, WHICH HE CHARACTERIZED AS TYPICAL OF THE TYPE OF PLANNING WITH WHICH MILITARY STAFFS OCCUPY THEMSELVES IN PEACETIME. HE SAID THAT THE OPEC COUNTRIES WERE "VERY SOLID, VERY UNITED" AND PLANNED TO EXTEND THEIR COOPERATION INTO OTHER AREAS OF COLLABORATION

VICE MIN OF INTERIOR MARCO TULIO BRUNI CELLI TOLD THE PRESS CONNECTION WITH THE CONGRESSIONAL STUDY THAT "BIG STICK" POLITICS WERE A THING OF THE PAST AND THAT NEITHER THE PEOPLE NOR THE GOVT OF THE U.S. CONTEMPLATED MILITARY ACTION AGAINST VENEZUELA.

3. COMMENT: ESCOVAR TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THAT HE WAS "BESIEGED" BY THE PRESS ON THIS ISSUE. WE HAVE NOW PROVIDED HIM WITH A COPY OF CONGRESSMAN LEE HAMILTON'S PRESS RELEASE OF AUG 21 (STATE 213920).
SHLAUDEMAM

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, ALLEGATIONS, INVASIONS, US CONGRESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS, STUDIES, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, PRESS RELEASES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 SEP 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: johnsorg
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975CARACA09427
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750313-0488
From: CARACAS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750967/aaaachkr.tel
Line Count: 77
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 213920
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: johnsorg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 SEP 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 SEP 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <18 DEC 2003 by johnsorg>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FOREIGN MINISTER ESCOVAR SALOM DENIES POSSIBILITY OF U.S. INVASION OF VENEZUELA
TAGS: PFOR, VE, US, (ESCOVAR SALOM, RAMON)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006